

LESSON

2.3

Writing a Review



Learning Objective:

Write a review to express opinions about a film; learn the elements of a review; develop a film vocabulary

Curriculum Strand

Writing, Media Studies (English); Analysis, Creation (Drama)

Materials Needed:

- Class set of Handout 2.3.1 - Journal
- Class set of Handout 2.3.2 - Writing a Film Review
- Class set of Handout 2.3.3 - Film Review Rubric

Journal:

Class time for Journal Handout 2.3.1

Write a review of something you really like. This could be a new album, video game, new product, clothing, whatever! Remember to give reasons supporting your opinions. Also, it may be helpful to consider the opinions that others may have about your topic.

Game/Activity: Dr. Know-It-All

1. Set up five chairs in a line at the front of the class. Ask for five students to come up to the front and sit in the chairs.
2. Explain that the class is lucky to have this guest film professor with them today, and that the film professor is Dr. Know-It-All – a world renowned expert on films. Explain that the Doctor shares five brains and can only speak one word of an answer at a time.
3. Students can then ask the Doctor questions about the films in the festival or movies in general and the students at the front will attempt to answer – one word at a time.
4. Students acting as the doctor can pick someone else from the class to replace them, to let others have a chance at the front.

Homework Check-in: Have students show their scavenger hunt sheets to each other in small groups and then hand them in.

Content/Lesson: Writing a review

Have the students use **HANDOUTS 2.3.2 & 2.3.3** (Writing a Film Review & Rubric) to write a review for one of the films that they watched in the festival or in the classroom. Emphasize that students should identify the **choices** that were made in the construction of the film and examine what effect these choices had. These reviews can keep positive by staying on the film appreciation side of film critique.



**SENIOR GRADE Lesson Extension:**

- Adapt the level of this review by choosing the quantity of questions the students need to address in their review.
- Introduce a bibliography section of the assignment, using accepted citation methods. Have students cite the film that they are reviewing, and another review on this film.
- Include a comparison of another work by one of the film artists and how this film connected or differed.
- Include a comparison of this film to a similar American or international film. Highlight the major differences of the two films, giving examples and how they reflect their country of origin.
- Areas of comparison might include the way in which themes, characters, diversity/ethnicity, humour, etc are presented.

Homework: Students should finish their journals and type their film review to hand in.

JOURNALING

For the REEL CANADA Canadian Film unit, you will keep a journal that your teacher may collect at the end.

Your journal is **your chance** to be creative and think about a topic or issue and express how you feel about it.

What is your opinion? What do you really think about something? How do you want to express that?

Your journal can take on any form you feel most comfortable with. Some people write their opinions, others draw, doodle, write poems, brainstorm, collage, make lists or create something totally new. This is your chance to **be yourself**. Every answer is right. Go for it. Start with the questions and see where they take you.

.....

Your journal can be a duotang, small binder or notebook .

Decorate the cover of your journal with pictures, drawings, words and photos that show what film means to you. At least 50% of the decorations should be Canadian content.

.....

If you are stuck on what to write, consider the **Three Rs of Journalling**:

- **Retell** – write in your own words what this topic is about or what you have experienced
- **Respond** – how this topic makes you feel and makes others feel
- **Relate** – how has this topic been part of your life

JOURNAL RUBRIC

	L1 (50 - 59)	L2 (60 - 69)	L3 (70 - 79)	L4 (80 -100)
Completion	2-3 entries complete	3-6 entries complete	7-10 entries complete	10- 13 entries complete
Effort	Very little	Some	Good	Outstanding
Depth of responses	Straight forward answers	Some thought and exploration	Thoughtful responses	Thoughtful and insightful responses
Decoration with 50% Can. Content	Quick job of decorating, no Can-con	Moderate decoration, some Can-con	Attractive decoration with 50% Can-con	Amazing looking journal with Can-con
Creativity	Entries are all the same	Some variety in entries	Entries are creative and interesting	Very Creative and varied entries

TEACHER FEEDBACK:

• • •



This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The background is a clean, solid white color.



Writing a Film Review

After watching a film, you can write your thoughts about the film in a review. Usually, a newspaper, magazine or website will have a professional film critic who watches movies and writes reviews for others to read. There are also entire blogs devoted to reviewing films. Based on the reviews, a movie might sell more tickets, or lose their place on the screen to a more popular film!

A film review can be persuasive or informative, formal or personal. It depends on what you want to say about the movie and who is paying you to do it!

Choose from these questions (or your own) to concentrate on for your review. Include an introduction and conclusion. Your review must be one page, typed. It may include a sketch. It will be due on : _____

Junior/Intro Questions

1. Briefly summarize the plot (what happens) of the film.
2. Consider how to describe the plot without spoiling the details for someone who hasn't seen it yet.
3. Comment on the actors specifically. Who was effective?
4. Describe the location where the film was shot and the effect it had on the story.
5. What were the shots like in the film? Were there some artistic shots? Beautiful shots? Surprising shots? Action shots?
6. What was the most moving or most memorable scene in the film?
7. How were sound and music used in the movie? What mood was created?
8. Give the film a rating out of 10 stars (or maple leaves!) and explain your reasoning - did you like it? What are your reasons?

Senior/Advanced Questions

9. What choices did the director make when telling the story?
10. Did the editing of the film seem smooth and transition nicely between the scenes to keep a good pace to the story?
11. How did the shots in the film contribute to your experience of the film?
12. What were the themes of the story, and how did the film share these themes with the audience? Did you agree with the message of the film?
13. Compare this movie to another one that you've seen with a similar theme. How are they similar and different?
14. What was specifically Canadian about this film?

FILM REVIEW RUBRIC

	L1 (50 - 59)	L2 (60 - 69)	L3 (70 - 79)	L4 (80 -100)
Content	Limited evidence of appropriate content from film	Some evidence of appropriate content from film	Considerable evidence of appropriate content from film	Thorough evidence of appropriate content from film
Forming Conclusions	Forms flawed conclusions	Forms some conclusions	Forms logical conclusions	Forms insightful conclusions
Style	Limited evidence of proofreading; a considerable number of grammatical errors	Some evidence of proofreading; a number of grammatical errors	Evidence of proofreading; few grammatical errors	Well-proofread review with very effective grammar
Mechanics	Limited evidence of proofreading; a considerable number of punctuation and spelling errors	Some evidence of proofreading; a number of punctuation and spelling errors	Evidence of proofreading; few punctuation and spelling errors	Well-proofread review with very effective punctuation and spelling
Organization: Intro, Conclusion and six parts	A limited organizational plan	Somewhat effective organizational plan	Evidence of considerable organizational plan	Effective organizational plans.